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New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Agenda item 67

Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Draft resolution (A/66/L.2)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I declare open the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. This meeting is being held in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 64/148 of 18 December 2009, 65/240 of 24 December 2010 and 65/279 of 13 June 2011, and under sub-item (b) of agenda item 67, entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action".

I warmly welcome all to this High-level Meeting. We meet here today to reaffirm that we, the peoples and nations of the world, make up one family rich in diversity. It is our diversity that enriches humankind and steers its progress. It is through the celebration of this diversity as well as through the promotion of tolerance and dispelling fears of the other, that we will build a more peaceful world, a world based on the fundamental principles of equality, trust and mutual respect.

I should like to thank the co-facilitators, Her Excellency Ms. Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations, and His Excellency Mr. Tommo Monthe, Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations, for having very ably led the preparations for this High-level Meeting. In that connection, I wish to express my gratitude to them for their excellent efforts.

Today's meeting is an opportunity for world leaders to speak with one voice on one of the most critical global challenges of the twenty-first century — the continuing scourge of racism and xenophobia worldwide. It is also an opportunity to recommit to the full and effective implementation of the actions outlined in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by consensus in 2001. Together with the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action is the most comprehensive framework for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It highlights issues faced by victims of racial discrimination, particularly people of African and Asian descent, migrants, refugees, and specific vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples and other minorities. It also emphasizes that we must remember the crimes or wrongs of the past, wherever and whenever they occurred. We must unequivocally condemn these racist tragedies and tell the truth about history. These are essential elements for international

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reconciliation and the creation of societies based on justice, equality and solidarity.

Unfortunately, despite progress made since the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted in 2001, instances of xenophobia, racism and intolerance have increased in severity and frequency. Racist attitudes and hate speech can be found in many countries, and the Internet provides a new vehicle for their proliferation. While countries have come a long way in removing obstacles to the realization of the fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination, much more remains to be done on this score.

I wish to encourage all countries, individually and collectively, to intensify their efforts to reduce instances of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It is the responsibility of States to enact the necessary legislative measures to prevent the occurrence of discriminatory practices and to grant justice to the victims. Governments, in collaboration with other stakeholders, including civil society and business, should intensify awareness-raising initiatives and enhance education in order to combat ignorance and effectively address the root causes of prejudice and negative stereotypes.

This High-level Meeting is an opportunity for all of us to reaffirm our collective responsibility for combating racism and promoting equality and non-discrimination. It is also an opportunity to come together in unity to address the critical challenges before us. I wish us all a successful meeting.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Ten years, ago in adopting the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action against racism, the international community acknowledged that no country could claim to be free of discrimination and intolerance.

Ten years later, that is still the case. Certainly we have come a long way. We have seen new laws enacted; new institutions pursuing justice; new initiatives promoting dialogue; and new mindsets taking hold. We are better prepared to prosecute and protect against grave crimes such as genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing and contemporary forms of slavery. Our antennae are better attuned to see the insidious forms of discrimination — the subtle, face-to-face interactions and institutionalized prejudice that can be every bit as destructive as outright aggressive behaviour.

Yet we must acknowledge that intolerance has increased in many parts of the world over the past decade. The resurgence and persistence of such inhumane attitudes and detrimental practices indicate that we have not done enough to stem the tide. Members have before them a global action plan that includes recommendations for combating discrimination against Africans and persons of African descent, Asians and persons of Asian descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, minorities, the Roma, and others. Let us do more to embrace diversity and safeguard the dignity of these groups.

I welcome this year's observance of the International Year for People of African Descent and the many constructive initiatives it has generated. Let us stand firmly against anti-Semitism. We must oppose Islamophobia and reject discrimination against Christians. Bias based on religious identity has no place in our world. Let us defend the rights of all, without distinction of any kind, as the Universal Declaration proclaims. Neither race, colour nor language; neither political nor other opinion; neither property, birth nor other status should be a barrier to the enjoyment of rights and freedoms.

Let us also stay in the vanguard against bigotry and commit to fighting discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. Victims of prejudice must be at the centre of our efforts, as the theme of this event rightly indicates. Our battle for mutual respect and understanding is no feel-good exercise.

The stakes are high indeed. Ignorance and intolerance are among the root causes of conflicts. Racism and discrimination are major obstacles to development. All too often, we see a vicious cycle in which discrimination leads to deprivation and poverty deepens discrimination. A marked characteristic of virtually all extremely poor communities is that they lack equal access to State institutions and services. Hard economic times such as these only exacerbate the situation. Competition for jobs and other difficulties often trigger hostility towards migrants and minorities. Governments have to ensure that unemployment and deteriorating living standards do not provide excuses for attacks on vulnerable groups. We must resist polarizing politicians who play on people's fears and use stereotypes to gain electoral advantage.

We are all aware that the original Durban Conference and its follow-up two years ago caused immense controversy. On this anniversary, let us restate some basic principles. This process is meant to further the world's essential fight against racism. We should condemn anyone who uses this platform to subvert that effort with inflammatory rhetoric, baseless assertions and hateful speech. Our common commitment must be to focus on the real problems of racism and intolerance. Let us strive to ensure dignity, equality and justice for all. Let us work hand in hand with the civil society groups that are so central to this cause. Let us work in harmony to promote harmony.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Ms. Pillay (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights): Today we commemorate the adoption by consensus, in September 2001, of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. I salute the vast majority of Member States that are showing their support for this important achievement, intended to combat racism and make a difference in the lives of so many victims worldwide. The lead-up to this commemoration has been undoubtedly challenging, in no small part because the issues are complex and sensitive. No country can claim to be free of racism, but we must be resolute in finding the courage to unite and move ahead together.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, together with the outcome document of the 2009 Review Conference, provide a comprehensive framework to address the scourge of racism. Crucially, both documents place victims at the centre of our efforts against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. They contain a genuinely universal condemnation of racism which acknowledges the injustices of the past and forewarns against both resurgent manifestations and new forms of racism and intolerance.

The Declaration lists a wide range of victims and grounds. Among the former, it speaks of the plight of minorities, such as the Roma, of people of African and Asian descent, of migrants and indigenous peoples. Among the latter, it includes condemnation of stigma and discrimination on the basis of HIV/AIDS, discrimination based on descent and the multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion faced in particular by women. In sum, the document encompasses victims, sources, causes and forms. It deals with racism in media and new information and communication technologies, trafficking, migration, conflict, poverty and internal displacement. It covers discrimination both in the private and the public sphere. It considers legal assistance and the provision of effective remedies for victims and those affected by racism.

Another important feature of the Declaration is that it not only reminds Governments of their core human rights obligations, but details further actions that States should take in collaboration with parliaments, national institutions, civil society and other partners. It also contemplates strategies of enhanced international cooperation which involve the United Nations and other international mechanisms.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference make clear that the anti-discrimination agenda concerns and belongs to all of us irrespective of our race, colour, descent, ethnic or national origin, affiliation, religion or belief. Their principles are the reliable foundations of our action, and they continue to provide firm guidance in the face of changing circumstances and new challenges.

Although 10 years ago, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action presciently provided a comprehensive framework to address contemporary challenges, today we must confront the regrettable gap between the commitments made at that time and the concrete and effective action actually undertaken. Some States have made incremental progress in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, largely through the enactment or amendment of constitutional protections and domestic legislation. The importance of solid legal regimes to protect rights and provide avenues for remedy and redress is indisputable.

Yet, tangible progress cannot be attained without the political will to implement and enforce such laws. Let us pledge here and now to revitalize our efforts nationally, regionally and globally to combat the scourges of racism. We can begin by showing leadership here today by underscoring that equality and non-discrimination are fundamental principles of the international community. They give hope to victims.

We must all commit to actions at all levels that address underlying and often structural causes of racism.

The road to a world free from racism is not an easy one. Anti-discrimination work needs careful planning and a long-term focus. It requires commitment and persistence. In this respect, I wish to highlight the importance of developing the national action plans that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action envisage, with the participation of victims and affected groups. National action plans are proving to be an important tool to address racism at the domestic level. My Office has been providing training and technical assistance in this area, and we stand ready to assist more States in this endeavour. We will also continue to serve as a forum for dialogue, exchange and research on anti-discrimination issues because we believe that informed, credible exchange and dialogue among States, United Nations experts, academics, parliaments, civil society and other partners on these issues can create greater understanding and build trust.

As mandated by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue to support key mechanisms such as the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Finally, we are determined to continue enhancing anti-discrimination efforts across the United Nations. It will be important to ally with our sister agencies to improve our system-wide coordination on anti-discrimination issues affecting women, children, indigenous peoples, migrants, trafficked persons, people living with HIV/AIDS, and others.

I wish to conclude by noting that few people in the world today would openly deny that human beings are born with equal rights, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims. We all agree that far too many people are still victimized because they belong to a particular group — whether national, ethnic, or religious, or defined by gender or by descent. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, through the perspective of victims, provides a comprehensive framework within which to translate this sentiment and this recognition into action.

Looking ahead there is much more work to be done to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. I urge everyone to summon the political will to unite on this issue of central importance in the lives of countless victims. So far, we have done too little too slowly. We have allowed the global response to racism to be clouded by politics. We must do better. The victims of racism demand and expect this of us.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa.

President Zuma: Ten years ago, South Africa had the honour to welcome to its shores States Members of the United Nations and people from across the world to attend the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Just under a decade before that, it would have been inconceivable that a gathering of that nature, discussing racism, would have taken place in South Africa. The Conference was testimony of the success of humankind against the scourge and demon of racism and racial discrimination. It was also a confirmation of the success of the international community, represented by the United Nations, in the struggle against the evil of racism, which the United Nations boldly and correctly declared a crime against humanity.

It was also symbolic that the Conference was held on African soil, given that, in the preceding two centuries, the African peoples had experienced untold sufferings, brutality and inhumane treatment during the course of colonialism, occupation and apartheid. In Africa, the legacy of all these ills is still visible and is part of our daily efforts to improve the lives of our people. In Durban, the world spoke with one voice and reaffirmed its commitment to continue to fight against the scourge of racism and to do everything to eradicate it. The world collectively agreed on the need for and the significance of a comprehensive framework to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In this regard, the Durban Declaration and its Programme of Action were unanimously adopted. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action provided a comprehensive assessment of the state of racism,

racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerance in the world at the time, and offered a collective set of actions to be undertaken to address the challenge. South Africa appreciates the decision the General Assembly has taken to mark the 10 years since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

We note the progress made in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the fight against racism. However, as we meet today, racism continues to pose a challenge in the same way that it did in 2001. Racism and racial discrimination continue to be a brutal attack on human dignity and an affront to the self-worth of individuals and have a prolonged and negative impact on their victims.

We continue to reaffirm our strong conviction that racism and racial discrimination are a negation of the United Nations Charter and its principles. The prevalence of racism, xenophobia and other related intolerance would therefore be an indictment of the Organization itself and its Member States. In this tenth year, we must reflect with openness and honesty on the issues that continue to divide us. There is no need to have detractors on this question when we have all long agreed that racism is an affront to humanity and a negation of the principles of the United Nations.

We urge the world not to be distracted in this noble struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerance. We should continue with the same resolve and determination that led to the end of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. We welcome some of the initiatives taken to redress. We have since 2001 seen authorities make public apologies to victims of racism and racial discrimination in some countries. Cultural artefacts have been returned to their places of origin in some instances, and in some cases reparation has been paid. However, there is still a lot of outstanding work that must be done. Therefore, we support the initiative to erect a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade as being among the important interventions that are urgent and necessary.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as a comprehensive United Nations framework for the eradication of racism. We call on all States Members of the United Nations and the world in general to reaffirm our political commitment at the national, regional and international levels fully and effectively to implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We encourage all Member States to continue to adopt measures at the national level to fight the scourge of racism and effectively implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

In conclusion, racism and racial discrimination continue to pose a challenge to humanity today, and we need a collective effort to rid the world of this scourge. We look forward to the adoption of the draft declaration (A/66/L.2) at the end of this plenary meeting, renewing our political will to continue the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rahamtallah Mohammed Osman, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Osman (Sudan): It gives me great honour to address this High-level Meeting on behalf of the African Group to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption by consensus of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action is the most comprehensive, action-oriented global framework to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Group welcomes the progress made at the national, regional and international levels in conformity with the obligations and commitments of Durban. This event undoubtedly provides a timely opportunity to assess the progress made in implementation of the outcome of the Conference, to identify the obstacles and challenges encountered, and to find the appropriate solutions they require.

Today, we not only commemorate Durban but reaffirm and renew our firm global political commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome of the Durban Review Conference in 2009. We are also encouraged by those Governments that, since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, have adopted landmark and

progressive legislative and administrative measures effectively to combat racism and racial discrimination, to protect the rights of migrants and racial, national or ethnic and linguistic minorities, and to combat incitement to hatred based on religion or belief.

Despite these efforts undertaken by the international community, Governments and local authorities, the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance persists and continues to result in violations of human rights, suffering, disadvantage and violence. We are also still concerned that there has been a diminishing of civil liberties. We are alarmed by these assaults on human rights and the recurrence of violent incidents of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We also note the decisive steps to be taken by some Member States, the United Nations system and the international community at large to oppose the persistence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to enhance dialogue with the aim of understanding and promoting tolerance and full respect for cultural and ethnic diversity. These efforts must be complemented and strengthened through responsible media awareness campaigns and the promotion of the principles of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding through educational systems.

The African Group welcomes the tenth anniversary commemoration of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The African Group believes that this commemoration is a unique opportunity to rebuild a strong international consensus and mark the renewal of international engagement in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In light of persistent challenges, we should translate our commitment into action and take appropriate measures to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, which constitute the most comprehensive international framework in the fight against racism. Furthermore, it is indispensable to address with greater resolve and political will all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all spheres of life and in all parts of the world, including all those under foreign occupation.

The African Group is pleased that this commemoration is well attended and that the draft declaration (A/66/L.2) to be adopted by all participating States at this High-level Meeting will express the will of the international community to be united against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Group emphasizes that the momentum gained by the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the follow-up mechanisms, particularly within the United Nations system, will further strengthen the Declaration and create further impetus for the accelerated implementation by States and other actors of the laudable objectives encapsulated therein. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopts a victim-oriented approach to the problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Specific recommendations are formulated to combat discrimination against Africans and persons of African descent, Asians and persons of Asian descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, minorities, the Roma and other groups.

The Group emphasizes that the pledges and commitments made must be effectively implemented by all States, which retain primary responsibility in this respect. It reaffirms that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remain the basis and fundamental legal framework for the effective elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Group reiterates that slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade, new and emerging forms of slavery such as human trafficking, apartheid and colonialism, must never be forgotten, and in this regard welcomes actions undertaken at the premises of the United Nations in New York to honour the memory of victims through the establishment of the memorial commemorating the 200-year anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.

Furthermore, the Group recalls the adoption of the resolution entitled "United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons" (resolution 64/293) and urges its implementation.

For the African Group this event will provide an opportunity for heads of State and Government to

mobilize political will. It would like to see the tenth anniversary celebrated in a fitting manner during the round-table discussion, the culmination of which will be the adoption of an outcome that encapsulates the global resolve to end racism and place victims at the centre of our deliberations.

Before I conclude, I should like to state that the African Group supports the proposal made by His Excellency the President of South Africa to adopt the draft declaration (A/66/L.2) at the end of this morning's meeting.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Raden Mohammad Marty Muliana Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, who will speak on behalf of the Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to chair this High-level Meeting. I wish also to commend the co-facilitators and the experts who have deliberated over and negotiated the scope, modalities, format and organization of this High-level Meeting, as well as the draft political declaration (A/66/L.2) that will be the outcome product of this event. I am confident that the text that we will adopt has been drafted in a balanced manner to reflect our many common concerns in the areas of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Today we convene in this Hall of the United Nations to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It was 10 years ago that we gathered in South Africa at the historic World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, not merely as Governments but as the peoples of the world. The call we made from that World Conference to the peoples of the world was that we must fight against these prejudices with the greatest determination and perseverance because they are a sad blight on our common humanity.

The message from the World Conference against Racism was crystal clear. The struggle against racism is a struggle for human rights, dignity and the eradication of poverty. The fact that we adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action underscored the truth that if we have the political will to succeed we can find consensus on all issues. As a follow-up, in 2009 we met again at the Durban Review Conference in Geneva to take stock of the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and to see how far we had gone in the battle against racism in all its manifestations. Collectively we resolved to reinvigorate the political commitment of Member States to pursue the anti-racism agenda in the face of emerging challenges encapsulated in the outcome document of the Review Conference (A/CONF.211/8, chap. I).

A decade has passed and we must now ask ourselves whether we have truly unified our efforts to address the situation of the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance identified in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It is therefore a matter of great concern that despite the efforts of many groups and many nations, despite ample evidence of racism's terrible toll, racism still persists. That is why the eyes of the world, especially the eyes of victims, are again upon us today.

We speak of finding a new unity, as the times demand. There must therefore be a concerted effort by all of us, particularly since new forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to emerge. That is due to our joint realization that discrimination does not go away by itself. It must be addressed seriously, otherwise it can become a cause of social unrest and violence. We must therefore resolve to pursue our common goal of ensuring in all societies the effective enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

History is replete with terrible wrongs inflicted through lack of respect for the equality of human beings. This is manifested in colonialism and other wars of conquest, slavery, genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing and other atrocities. Despite victory over apartheid, there nevertheless remains a plethora of discriminatory laws and practices that affect the lives of whole communities in many parts of the world. We share the view that slavery, slave trading, colonialism and apartheid are major historical sources and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance. These past practices and policies are manifest today in the form of poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization and socio-economic exclusion, which have deeply affected developing countries over the years.

It is our profound belief that with the mobilization of political will at national, regional and international levels effectively to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as the outcome documents of the Durban Review Conference by our Governments in concert with all stakeholders, inter alia civil society and the private sector, will we be able truly to combat and curb the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all spheres of life and in all parts of the world, including all those under foreign occupation.

In conclusion, we proclaim our commitment and strong determination to make the fight against all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the protection of the victims thereof, a high priority for our respective countries.

The President: I now give the floor to the Representative of Romania, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European States.

Mrs. Miculescu (Romania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted 10 years ago, which we are now here to commemorate, highlight the commitment of the international community to focus its political will on the global fight against the scourge of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. They also showed that countries can go beyond inherent political grievances and unite around a common goal, namely, to put an end to the phenomenon of racism.

We can acknowledge that no modern society, irrespective of its geographical, cultural and civilizational specificities or level of development, is free from the complex manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and hatred. No country has a perfect record, no society is beyond criticism. Therefore, our pledged commitments in the fight against racism can be successful only through concerted action taken at all levels — local, national regional and international. To that end, although some States in our Group are not participating in today's meeting, all countries in the Eastern European Group remain stern and determined supporters of the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and are committed to continue to take measures to further secure, at all levels in our societies, the utmost respect for all fundamental rights and freedoms and for the principle of universal equality.

Much has been achieved in 10 years, yet much remains to be done. All of us in our countries at all levels and in our respective societies, collectively and individually, must make sure that our political commitments are translated into actions. Action is needed now since, in spite of all our rhetoric and good intentions, many regrettably continue to be victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. All of us should therefore stay committed and alert in addressing and pre-empting all acts of incitement to violence, hatred and segregation. We have the means, we just need to seize the momentum.

All our efforts aimed at combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination, extremism and their diverse manifestations must be guided by the full respect for all fundamental rights and freedoms in accordance with our obligations under international human rights law. In that regard, universal accession and ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the full implementation of its provisions are necessary in order to ensure the effectiveness of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. However, we can only note with regret that we are still lagging behind not only in its universal ratification but also in its full observance.

While we acknowledge the prime role of national Governments in the fight against racism and the implementation of the Convention, we must also note the key role that the United Nations system plays in our fight. We highlight the constant efforts of the Human Rights Council, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, and of the relevant regional organizations in the field of combating racism and racial discrimination. We must also continue positively to engage civil society and the media in complementing our concerted efforts in this fight. Their contribution is essential since they work alongside Governments in providing assistance to victims of discrimination and contribute, inter alia, to awareness-raising campaigns and research.

We have come a long way since the adoption of the Declaration adopted in Durban 10 years ago, but

we still face many challenges and obstacles on the road towards a world free of racism. However, we are confident that everything can be overcome in the light of reason. As Abraham Heschel, a great thinker from our part of the world, once said, "racism is man's gravest threat to man — the maximum hatred for a minimum of reason".

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the countries in our Group will stay committed and actively engaged in the complex fight against racism, intolerance and discrimination. In doing so, we will stay united in our determination to prevent these acts in the future.

The President: I now give the floor to The Honourable Mr. Kenneth Baugh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Baugh (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States at this High-level Meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action under the theme "Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development".

Ten years ago in Durban, the international community courageously took a stand to eliminate from our world the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other intolerance. Today we take stock of the strides taken over the years to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We are equally mindful that, notwithstanding our efforts, much more needs to be done if we are fully to realize those goals and objectives.

We note the progress achieved at the intergovernmental level with the creation of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and the Independent Expert on minority issues. We are conscious that many of our Governments, at the national level, have sought to protect the diverse and multicultural nature of their societies. Some States have created specialized national mechanisms to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to promote equality, justice and dignity, while in others legislation, as well as national plans and policies, including affirmative action measures, have been adopted that will ensure that minorities and vulnerable groups can be fully integrated into society. We reiterate our commitment to enhance the work and functioning of national mechanisms to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

However, despite the progress made in combating racism, the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action has not been satisfactory. We acknowledge that the Durban process is a work in progress, which will require the combined effort of every member of the international community if we are to eliminate these atrocities from our midst. To that end, we hope that this meeting will serve as a catalyst for united action in formulating concrete strategies to achieve our objective to recognize the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to provide them with justice, dignity and a fair chance for realizing their full potential, as well as raising racism as a global concern.

Member States from the Latin American and Caribbean region have been supportive of, and have actively participated in, the work to promote the goals and objectives of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to achieving a world free of racial intolerance and other injustices. We must be mindful that victims in many parts of the world continue to suffer from violence on the basis of their ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Migrants and migrant workers are still easy targets for manifestations of racism and xenophobia and racial discrimination.

We therefore call upon Member States to develop policies and programmes to protect the rights of migrants and migrant workers. In that regard, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities also suffer grave forms of racial discrimination and related intolerance and require specific measures to promote their participation in society and the full realization of their human rights.

Negative stereotyping of persons based on their religion or belief, and an increase in incidents related to religious hatred, are still factors that must be addressed, both at the national and international levels. The proliferation of hate speech also remains a challenge in many parts of the world, exacerbated by the misuse of new technologies for mass dissemination of negative and/or stereotypical information. It is

therefore necessary for all Member States to promote greater levels of social inclusion, which is essential in order to reduce racial discrimination and related intolerance.

The Member States of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States remain convinced that intercultural dialogue, tolerance, education and respect for diversity are useful approaches for the international community to embark on a common and consensual global programme of action to combat these scourges. It is also necessary to address the root causes and to take a broad range of preventive and corrective measures, including legislative action where appropriate, to eliminate acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Today's commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action presents another opportunity to mobilize political will for global resolve to end racism and place victims at the centre of our deliberations. In that context, the Group emphasizes that renewed emphasis and adequate funding for the follow-up mechanisms, as well as sustained international cooperation, are indispensable to addressing all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We are pleased with the decision taken by the General Assembly to erect a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We encourage Member States, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and private individuals to support this and other initiatives that will serve to enhance the visibility of the message of the Declaration and Programme of Action. This year, as we celebrate the International Year for People of African Descent, the memorial takes on added significance, showcasing our determination to ensure that this historical wrong and its associated residual effects of racism and racial discrimination will never again be repeated.

In conclusion, the Member States of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States reaffirm the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome (A/CONF.211/8, chap. I) of the 2009 Durban Review Conference, as well as our commitment to its full and effective implementation. We are convinced that the Durban process, if given the necessary support of all Member States, can result in the eradication of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, thus allowing people everywhere to experience the full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights and freedoms. We look forward to the adoption of the draft political declaration (A/66/L.2) at the end of this morning's meeting.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Group of Western European and Other States, on behalf of which I have the honour to speak, has acknowledged that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance undermine the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. By belonging to the human family, we are born free and equal in dignity and rights and should act towards each another in a spirit of fellowship without making any distinction.

In building on the progress already made, it is our common responsibility to promote the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance — scourges that persist in all of our countries and threaten the foundations of our democratic societies, namely, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

While a number of countries of our Group are not participating in today's event, and in spite of the fact that some States do not participate in this process, we all renew our unwavering commitment to pursue at international, regional and national levels the implementation of effective measures to fight these scourges, to end impunity and to mainstream the promotion of equality and equal opportunities into all Government policies.

The Western European and Other States Group reaffirms its solidarity with the numerous victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance who continue to be flouted and trampled upon throughout the world. Each victim must be recognized and receive the same attention.

Whatever the source, cause, form or manifestation, racism and racial discrimination undermine human dignity and must be combated in order to avoid the denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the human person. We attach the utmost importance to education, training and

prevention, as they allow for a better understanding of the phenomena to be fought and to promote the richness of our differences and respect for our diversity.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our call for the universal ratification and full and effective implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, an instrument to which all of the members of our Group are parties as well as the main legal instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Sarah White, Board President of the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights.

Ms. White (Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights): On behalf of the countless victims of racial discrimination throughout the world, it is an honour to carry these voices here today. I bring to the Assembly greetings from the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights, where I serve as the President of the Board of Directors.

The Center was founded by long-time human rights activist Ms. Jaribu Hill in 1996. Located in the Mississippi delta, the Center fights for the dignity and human rights of low-wage African-American workers and all those who languish in extreme poverty.

But I am here today as the voice of those who have been excluded, marginalized, violated and denied their basic human rights. When I sat on the Voices of Victims panel at the World Conference in Durban in 2001 and then again at the Durban Review Conference in 2009, I spoke about the history of the struggles of Mississippi catfish workers and the battles we faced every day for human rights and justice. I described how we as black women had to stand on our feet for 12 hours a day in ankle-deep water that contained chlorine and other harmful chemicals. That contaminated water caused severe skin rashes and other serious physical ailments. White male supervisors would force us to speed up our work on the assembly line so that the company could make maximum profit. The bosses did not care about the health and well-being of the workers. Supervisors would terrorize us, making threats: "Speed up or lose your job". We were sexually and racially harassed on a daily basis. We were denied bathroom privileges. Those are some of the conditions that workers encounter every day today in the catfish and poultry plants. These indignities are suffered by us as workers because of our skin colour and economic class.

I am here today to let everyone know that we rose up and fought to get justice and human rights. We held labour strikes and won battles and began a workers' rights movement all over the state. Plants began to organize. Although we won many battles, we still must continue the struggle. There is racial profanity, intimidation and harassment on a daily basis. Even today, extrajudicial killings still take place. Workplaces are still racially segregated. Black workers are still assigned to the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs and forced to work in conditions that look a lot like slavery. People are still dying to make a living.

The Center started 15 years ago by assisting low-wage African-American workers, but we help all workers. We give workers a platform to organize themselves to fight against racial injustices. We educate them about their rights and about laws. We also work on housing and other community issues. We work through a network of lawyers, organization educators, teachers, women's groups, social workers and everyday people who are dedicated to protecting human rights. Students from all across the United States and throughout the world come to the Center as interns and help us to work on cases, educate workers, put out flyers in the community, work with prisoners and people just released from prison to make sure their rights are not violated when it comes to jobs. They help us to do all the groundwork in home work and community outreach.

All kinds of people come to help: rich and poor, white and black, indigenous, from different backgrounds and different religions. The Center is a space for the community to come together to educate workers. Most importantly, we work with youth to fight injustices and prevent discrimination in the future. We hold town hall meetings to discuss educational issues in the community, such as the fact that there are not enough schoolbooks. We work very hard with little. Funding is a big concern for us.

The World Conference against Racism and the Durban Review Conference are experiences that I will never forget. I saw that the work we do is very much the kind of work that every civil society group does throughout the world. I know that people are going through the exact same thing, only in a different place.

I remember meeting so many amazing people in Durban, South Africa. I saw people from throughout the world standing up for their rights. I met other victims of racial discrimination. Their courage was so powerful. I keep in touch with many of them and we help each other out still today.

The Conference gave me hope that I could go back and continue to fight in my community. I think I have done that. I really want us to come together on the same front to make sure that Governments have open ears to these issues that affect us as human beings. Politicians must be held accountable for what they do. After we elect them, we must make sure that they remember the needs of the victims and protect our rights.

Most countries have not advanced very far from where they were 10 years ago in Durban. There is still massive unemployment and problems with discrimination in the education and prison systems. There are still problems with health care and workers' rights. Today is a chance for Governments to come together and rise up against racism. I hope that they do not waste this chance. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action are important in helping give people hope and opportunity. This fight is about our struggle — the struggle of people of African descent, people of Asian descent, indigenous people, women, children, minorities — and our strength comes from organizing and bringing our voices together on one platform to make the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action work.

The President: We have heard the last speaker inscribed on my list.

As members will recall, the Assembly decided in its resolution 65/279 that the High-level Meeting would adopt the draft political declaration (A/66/L.2) at the closing plenary meeting. Members will also recall that the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, who spoke on behalf of the African States, proposed this morning that consideration of and action on the political declaration should take place at this opening plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft political declaration at this opening plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/66/L.2, entitled "United against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/66/L.2?

Draft resolution A/66/L.2 was adopted (resolution 66/3).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): On this occasion, I should like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Tommo Monthe, Permanent Representative of Cameroon, and Ms. Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of Monaco, who so ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations so as to bring them to a successful conclusion. I am sure that members of the General Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.